(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) what will be the anticipated reduction in imports and growth in the exports as a result thereof; and

(d) what is the anticipated post market prices of foodgrains and the steps contemplated by Government to protect the interests of the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The production of foodgrains during the current year is estimated to be an all time record of 200.88 million tonnes. The crop-wise details are as under:—

Crop	Production (million tonnes)
Rice	84.48
Wheat	70.63
Coarse Cereal	30.58
Pulses	15.19
TOTAL:	200.88

(a) As a result of a bumber harvest, no import of foodgrains is anticipated except for pulses. On the other hand, there may be exports of higher quantities of rice and wheat products that would depend on international market conditions.

(b) The prices of foodgrains are expected to rule modest in the post-harvest period. In order to protect the interest of farmers, the Government has taken measures to procure foodgrains at minimum support prices (MSP) to prevent prices from falling below MSP.

Sub-Groups of Task Force on Infrastructure

*347. SHRI SANATAN BISI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) how many sub-groups have been constituted under the task force on infrastructure; and

(b) what are the details of recommendations, if any?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) There are no standing sub-groups of the Task Force on Infrastructure. However, during the course of the seven meetings of the Task Force on Infrastructure held till date, Working Groups have been formed to address specific issues.

The following are the details of sub-groups formed.

(i) *Sub-Group on Alternative Financing of National Highway Development Project (NHDP)*

This group was headed by Finance Secretary and had Chairman, Infrastructure Development Finance Company (IDFC) and Member Secretary, Task Force as other members. Their mandate was to develop alternative and innovative means of ensuring availability of funds.

The Sub-Group presented a Report to the Task Force on the National Highway Development Project and suggested alternative ways of involving the private sector in executing, financing and funding the project, which included the imposition of a fuel cess and the creation of a dedicated fund.

(ii) *Sub-Group on Civil Aviation*

This Sub-Group had among others Secretary (Civil Aviation), Secretary to PM and Managing Director, Mahindra Ford. This Sub-Group was constituted in order to look into various aspects of a comprehensive airport policy such as changes required in the existing law and removal of obstacles for establishing world class international airports in which 100% foreign equity can be permissible.

The Sub-Group recommended progressive corporatisation of Airport Authority of India (AAI), commencing with corporatisation of the Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore airports in the first phase. Foreign equity participation upto 100% is to be permitted in the case of all these airports. Action is also to be initiated for setting up a regulatory framework for ensuring a level playing field for all the players.

(iii) *Sub-Group on Integrated Transport Policy*

Member, Planning Commission, headed this Sub-Group. The other Members of this sub-group included Principal Adviser (Transport), Planning Commission and IDFC. This Sub-Group was a direct offshoot of the announcement made by the PM in his address on the occasion of the International Seminar on Transport Policy on enlarging the mandate of the Task Force to formulate an integrated National Transport Policy to strengthen the transport infrastructure.

A draft report on the Integrated Transport Policy was finalised by Planning Commission in consultation with the Secretaries of the concerned Ministries and IDFC. This was subsequently put on the INTERNET and suggestions received appropriately incorporated. The modified draft report has been circulated again and is expected to be discussed by the Task Force shortly.

(iv) *Sub-Group on Implementation of NHDP*

The members of this Sub-Group were National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and Ministry of Finance. Their brief was to present the implementation of the Golden Quadrangle and explore the use of Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) in order to enhance the implementation of the NHDP.

This Sub-Group made a presentation to the Task Force on the schedule of implementing the Golden Quadrangle part of NHDP, the use of dedicated road fund and the use of SPVs to enhance the involvement of the private sector, following which they were asked to explore the option of shadow tolling and annuity payments in greater detail.

(v) *Sub-Group on Expressways*

This Sub-Group is headed by Secretary, Surface Transport and is to have representatives from Planning Commission, NHAI, M/o Finance. This sub-group has been constituted for identification of expressways, the institutional set up for the implementation of expressways and for analysis of data regarding the projected requirement of expressways.

This Sub-Group is expected to submit its report to the Task Force shortly.

Earthquake in Northern India

*348. SHRI ABANI ROY:
SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a major earthquake rocked northern parts of the country on 28-29 March, 1999, midnight;

(b) if so, the details of persons dead or injured and properties damaged as a result thereof in northern India, location-wise;

(c) the details of compensation paid by the concerned State Government and Union Government to the affected persons/families; and

(d) the details of assistance rendered by the Union Government to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), an earthquake of magnitude 6.8 on the Richter scale occurred at 0035 hours on 29th March, 1999 and another earthquake